



Emergency Management **UPDATE**

December 2002

State hits stride for public health emergency response

(Compiled from Virginia Dept. of Health news releases.)

In the past year, Virginia has made great strides in its capabilities to rapidly detect and respond to bioterrorism and other public health emergencies but must commit to a long hike to achieve its ultimate readiness goals.

"We still have work to do, and our preparedness efforts will continue to be a work-in-progress," says State Health Commissioner Robert B. Stroube, M.D., M.P.H.

According to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), the state's public health strategy effectively combines new and existing initiatives.

Supplemental grants from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) are helping underwrite 138 new response staff positions to create a solid public health infrastructure.

The grants include \$22,437,184 through August 2003 from the CDC and \$2,992,259 through April 2004 from HRSA. VDH already has hired about one-third of this additional staff and expects to fill the rest of the positions by early next year.

"People must be in place, trained and equipped with a well planned and tested system to



Hitting the ground running. As simulated in this Comprehensive Hazmat Emergency Response Capabilities Assessment Program (CHERCAP) exercise held in Bristol earlier this year, medical personnel are a key component of the response team in chemical emergencies. (VDEM Photo by George Roarty.)

effectively detect and respond to any public health emergency," says Deputy Commissioner for Emergency Preparedness and Response Lisa Kaplowitz, M.D., M.S.H.A.

Regional Epidemiologists dedicated to bioterrorism and emergency response are now in place in the major urban areas of Tidewater, Metropolitan Richmond and Northern Virginia.

Each of Virginia's 35 health districts will have an epidemiologist as well. Recently hired epidemiologists have received special training on the diseases most likely to be used in a bioterrorist attack.

The national pharmaceutical stockpile management plan, a component of the Virginia

Terrorism Consequence Management Plan, is a successful VDEM/VDH collaboration that outlines the infrastructure needed to effectively manage the CDC stockpile.

VDH has submitted its prevent and post-event smallpox response plans to the CDC.

They have also drafted a plan for pandemic influenza and developed disease specific guidelines for anthrax, tularemia, plague and viral hemorrhagic fevers.

Hospital emergency planning is ongoing at state and regional levels with close collaboration and planning within state and district health departments.

Communication will be critical to effective bioterrorism

response. VDH has a communications system in place to provide round-the-clock flow of critical health information to hospitals, state and local officials and other public health partners.

They also plan to use their existing 24-hour mandatory reportable disease surveillance system to help rapidly detect these events and launch response field investigations within six hours.

A health alert network will ensure effective communication connectivity among public health departments, healthcare organizations and other public health professionals.

For more information, log onto the VDH Web site at www.vdh.state.va.us or visit the CDC site at www.cdc.gov/smallpox. Also see related articles on page 3.

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Message from the State Coordinator

Grant packages make early holiday present for Virginia first responders

By Michael Cline

Ware pleased to announce that VDEM has received the long-awaited approval for the Department of Justice first responder equipment grants and is now able to move forward in making them available to you.

Though we will have to track expenditures for four grant years (1999-2002) simultaneously, we will all benefit from the ability to look at the overall existing funding and eliminate a requirement to piecemeal the relatively small amounts of dollars available each year.

As we have previously tracked each grant submitted under fiscal year categories, I'll follow that format in explaining a fairly complicated grant package.



Phase I of the combined 1999-2002 grants will provide a direct allocation of \$20,000 and 50 cents per capita to each city and

county. Jurisdictions that did not receive funds under the Nunn-Lugar-Dominici Act will receive an additional \$3,777.77.

Applications for this direct pass-through phase of the grants were mailed to county and city chief administrative officers on Nov. 27.

Phase II, using set aside funding from 2000-2002, will be allocated under a competitive grant process emphasizing regional initiatives and those projects not readily accommodated under Phase I. Application packets for Phase II will be mailed later this month.

Funds allotted under the 1999-2001 grants may be used for four categories of equipment:

- Personal Protective Equipment
- Detection and Monitoring
- Decontamination
- Communications

The 2002 grant dollars may be used for those four equipment classes plus an additional five categories:

- Explosive Device Mitigation
- Weapons of Mass Destruction Technical Rescue
- Interoperable Communications
- Physical Security
- General Supplies (to include medical)

In addition, a total \$313,000 will be available to support eight preparedness exercises (seven regional and one state-wide). This translates to \$39,125 for each program. We anticipate implementing this initiative in early spring 2003.

While the initial application package has gone to the chief administrative officers for all cities and counties, it is important for local first responder groups to be a part of the grant coordination effort.

VDEM staff is working with the departments of Fire Programs and Criminal Justice Services, the Virginia State Police and the Office of Emergency Medical Services to assist local first responders in determining how best to use these funds.

We will also include first responder constituent group representatives in developing the criteria for and evaluation of competitive grant applications.

Though we have just received approval of these packages, localities will need to move quickly to expend 1999 grant funds by March 2003. The remainder of the funds must be used by June 2004.

While Congress is still assessing fiscal year 2003 funding for first responder equipment, we are optimistic that substantial additional funding will be made available.



On a second front, FEMA has allocated approximately \$2.9 million to Virginia under the 2002 Federal Budget Supplement. We submitted our application in November for funding in three categories.

1. State - Local All Hazards Emergency Management Planning — \$2.4 million

The Commonwealth has proposed that 80 percent of these funds be passed through to local governments

with a base amount plus a per capita add on. Localities receiving grant funds will complete several planning activities during the grant period to include:

- Updating their local Emergency Operations Plans.
- Completing a Local Capability Assessment for Readiness (LCAR).
- Developing an overall strategy for integrating all-hazards prevention and preparedness activities into response and recovery planning.

2. EOC Vulnerability and Capability Assessment — \$50,000

3. Citizen Corps Councils and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) — \$470,846

Grant-supported activities will include partial funding of state program management and the award of competitive grants to communities for establishing local Citizen Corps Councils and CERT training programs. Localities will receive 75 percent of this allocation.

The Citizen Corps/CERT portion was approved on Dec. 4. We expect an expedited review from FEMA and a decision on the remainder of the package this month.



If that occurs, we plan to forward grant applications to chief administrative officers in early January. These are 2002 funds that will need to be expended one year from the date of approval.

I know it has been a long wait and realize the simultaneous influx of funds from multiple grants puts tremendous pressure on local governments and first responders.

We will do all we can from the state level to ensure that all appropriate agencies are involved and working together to provide the assistance you need to access and allocate this funding.

We will post new information on our Web site and provide applicable links to you. Visit www.vaemergency.com to view the complete grants matrix.

Hampton Roads makes splash with terrorism response plan

By Bob Lambert, Staff Writer

The Hampton Roads Metropolitan Medical Response System, which covers 1.5 million residents in 16 localities, is receiving \$1.2 million to implement its recently approved operational plan to respond to a terrorist attack.

Building on the existing emergency response system with an all-hazards approach, the plan will guide the region's response for the first 24 to 48 hours after an attack until state and federal resources become available.

The plan also details the transfer of patients to other parts of the region or nation if an incident exceeds the capabilities of local emergency health care.

"After Sept. 11, we became acutely aware that terrorism on American soil is very much a reality," says Bill Ginnow, medical response program manager for Hampton Roads.

"Even before these events took place, localities in the region recognized that it was at risk and joined together so we can respond to the health and medical consequences of a terrorist attack."

More than 100 major metropolitan areas across the country participate in the medical response program, including Hampton Roads, Richmond and Arlington. The Richmond area has been working on its regional plan since 2001, and Arlington since earlier this year.

Hampton Roads started working on its plan three years ago through the Hampton Roads Regional Planning District Commission. Ranked as one of the strongest plans in the nation and the first operational plan in Virginia, the proposal received U.S. Public Health Service approval about two months ago.

"We're focusing on every aspect of medical preparation you can imagine," Ginnow says. "We can take care of both first responders and patients on the scene of any incident."

The medical response system will distribute medical supplies and antidotes for victims to include 1,200 sets of personal protection gear and pharmaceuticals for a variety of weapons.

Portable mass decontamination units are designed to flush toxic chemicals or radioactive dust from attack victims.

"The units are like a three-lane human car wash," Ginnow says.

In addition to its own pharmaceutical and medical supplies, the medical response program has access to the national pharmaceutical stockpile, which has amassed medical supplies in a dozen locations throughout the country. Release of the supplies during an emergency comes on orders from the state health commissioner.

MMRS participants include local law enforcement, hazmat, emergency management, emergency medical services, hospitals, pharmacies, mental health groups, and fire, public health, and communications departments.

They represent the cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach and Williamsburg, and the counties of Gloucester, Isle of Wight, James City, Southampton, Surry and York.

Training for personnel throughout these jurisdictions is now under way. Local medical response exercises are planned for next year and a regional test will be held in 2004.



Practice makes perfect. With a strong plan in place, training exercises will be critical for Hampton Roads MMRS readiness. (VDEM Photo by George Roarty.)

"We're going back for a second block of money after we conduct the required regional exercise," Ginnow says.

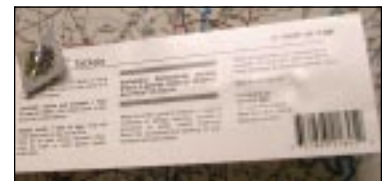
Contact Bill Ginnow, MMRS program manager, at (757) 446-5179 or ginnow@vaems.org or visit www.TidewaterEMS.org to learn more.

Hampton Roads MMRS key elements:

- Command and control
- Notification and alert
- Crime scene security
- Centralized communication control
- Public information
- Medical personnel management
- Supplies and equipment
- Patient tracking
- Laboratory support
- Crowd control

Initial KI distribution completed

In one month of voluntary potassium iodide (KI) pre-distribution, a total of 76,401 doses have been dispensed in the North Anna and Surry power station emergency planning zones.



This total from Oct. 18, 2002, includes 70,836 for the Surry Power Station area (pre-distribution to civilians, military installations and businesses) and 5,565 for North Anna.

The Virginia Department of Health maintains supplies at various locations where the tablets may continue to be made available to the general public.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on potassium iodide are available on the VDH Web site at www.vdh.state.va.us/hhcontrol/KIQuestions.pdf.

Mitigation goes to head of the class

By Bob Lambert, Staff Writer

After floods swept through parts of Southwest Virginia again last spring, the Lenowisco Planning District Commission decided to try building mitigation into the community's academic, vocational and adult educational effort.

Scheduled to begin in Wise County early next year, a special pilot program will give college-bound, career and vocational students the blueprints on making mitigation part of their toolboxes.

"When we handed out brochures to residents during last spring's floods, they tended to stick them in a drawer and forget about them," says Noah Thacker, a Wise County contractor, project manager and realtor who coordinated this project through FEMA with support from VDEM.

"We started talking to people and found out that a lot of them would be more interested in an educational program in the schools," Thacker says.

"If kids are better educated about the dangers of floodwaters, they will become better community leaders and more aware of the importance of building in the right area."

Thacker turned to FEMA Region III for mitigation materials and guidance for the Wise County curriculum.

He also worked closely with local leaders and educators and contacted state education officials for advice on using Virginia's Standards of Learning (SOL) in such areas as earth science, health and English composition as well as practical classes like carpentry, plumbing, electricity and heating.

The curriculum, including lesson plans and exercises, will be available on CD-ROM. The remainder of the planning district communities (the city of Norton, and Lee and Scott counties) will implement the program following field testing in Wise.

Although FEMA has been working with localities on mitigation education, the Lenowisco program is a new approach.

"We have not tried this particular approach before," says David Thomas, FEMA Region III branch chief for community mitigation programs. "If we are successful, the concept will spread throughout and beyond the region."



Learning curve. Wise County students will learn about mitigation measures such as elevating water heaters as part of a pilot education program. (FEMA News Photo by Dave Gatley.)

Build mitigation into education

Lenowisco Planning District mitigation education program goals:

- Provide an effective educational tool for use in educational environment and community organizations.
- Enable communities to deal more effectively with flood hazards.
- Establish a foundation for a state or region-wide educational program.
- Elevate awareness of health risks from floods and enhance flood mitigation procedures.

When the hammer hits the nail, making mitigation a foundation of future construction and housing rehabilitation will strengthen the community's ability to survive future floods.

"Our goal is to get everyone thinking mitigation when they build or rebuild a structure to help change the way they are built," says Richard Dameron, VDEM's hazard mitigation manager.

To learn more, contact Gene Marrone at gene.marrone@fema.gov (FEMA Region III).



Carvin's Cove. Photo courtesy The Roanoke Times, Eric Brady.

Drought Picture

It's not over until it's over

Virginia's drought coordinator lifted statewide limits on car washing, outdoor watering, refilling swimming pools and golf course watering effective Nov. 12 due to improvement in drought conditions.

"With the advent of recent rains, cooler weather, and leaf fall, the Commonwealth is generally in a much better position for public water supply during the winter," says David Paylor.

"Most public water supplies now appear to be in relatively good shape for the next few months."

Following the signing of Executive Order 33, public water supply savings topped 16 percent over 2001 usage levels. Conservation savings at large public water supplies continue to be reported.

The long-term drought forecast, however, remains guarded. Though consistent precipitation over a six-week period has eased Virginia's three-year drought, state drought officials estimate it would take an above-average wet winter through March 2003 to rebuild ground water reserves.

In other drought news, Gov. Mark Warner announced the creation of a \$2.5 million program to help with well replacement for low-income citizens.

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development will implement the new Virginia Dry Well Replacement Program to address the epidemic failure of private wells that reached more than 6,200 in a little over three months (July 1 to Oct. 15), compared to a couple of dozen during a normal year.

Virginia drought status updates are available on the VDEM Web site at www.vaemergency.com/prepare/drought/index.cfm.

Henrico exercise banks on business continuity

By Bob Lambert, Staff Writer

More than 100 responders from Henrico County and the Bank of America Villa Park operations center teamed up Nov. 1 for a continuity-of-business exercise testing public-private partnerships in the face of disaster.

In the scenario, pesticide gas released into the air handling system affected the center's 2,000 employees with about 45 taken to the hospital due to exposure.

The resulting mass casualties and crippling of a major business facility put private industry's relationships with medical responders and state and local government on the line.

For Bank of America, the simulation offered an opportunity to test their recovery plans, assess the loss of access to portions of the work site for three to five days and coordinate public information

activities with Henrico County.

"Exercises have been part of our disaster readiness planning within the bank for many years," says Ken Langford, corporate life safety manager for Bank of America.

"The tremendous partnership we enjoy with Henrico County and the state provided a way to combine our own tabletop disaster exercise inside our building with a simulated disaster event outside."

This year's simulation was originally scheduled for Sept. 12, 2001, but the attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center forced its postponement.

Henrico County officials say the joint exercise offered the opportunity to test integrated local, state and federal terrorism response plans as well as communications and incident command, coordination and response functions.

Henrico Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator



Rolling out the barrel. Responders remove hazardous materials from the Bank of America site during the business continuity training exercise that successfully integrated local government and business teams. (VDEM photo by Steve De Lisi.)

Captain W. M. Cox adds that the successful integration of Henrico Police Incident Management Team and Fire Hazardous Incident Team operations at a crime scene involving a hazardous atmosphere was also beneficial.

Cox says about 50 tactical, 35 Henrico County emergency operations center and 25 Bank of America on-site personnel worked together seamlessly to simulate an event stressing life safety actions, disrupting multiple business units and requiring activation of a Regional Support Team.

"The exercise showed that private industry can be integrated into our unified command system," Cox says.

"We were allowed to have access to facility plans and got connected to the right folks in the bank's facilities in St. Louis and Baltimore.

"You can say we had communication and information flow from across the country."

To learn more, contact Capt. W.M. Cox, Henrico Division of Fire, Office of Emergency Services, at cox16@co.henrico.va.us or Ken Langford, Bank of America, at ken.langford@bankofamerica.com.

De Lisi departs VDEM for Sandston fire chief position

VDEM Area 2 Hazardous Materials Officer Steve De Lisi has left the agency to become assistant fire chief for the Virginia Air National Guard at its Sandston facility.

Firefighting has been a lifelong passion for De Lisi who says he's been "chasing fire trucks" since the age of 12. He became active in a local Long Island, N.Y., volunteer fire department in 1972 and later served the Newport News Fire Department, including a stint as a hazmat officer.

De Lisi then spent five years with the Virginia Department of Fire Prevention before joining the VDEM family. During his five-year tenure with VDEM, De Lisi handled nearly 100

hazmat responses in a Central Virginia territory that includes the intersection of heavily traveled Interstate routes 95 and 64 in Richmond.

De Lisi also developed a resource guide and crime scene sampling kit for the Central Virginia Environmental Crimes Task Force and prepared a guidebook on mitigation of non-cargo motor vehicle spills.

In addition, he contributed a number of articles to national professional journals, including one that appeared recently in *Fire Engineering* magazine.

"Steve was a major contributor to the success of our hazmat response program," said Brett Burdick, VDEM



Farewell to a friend. Steve De Lisi (center) evaluates an October 2002 training exercise in Amelia. (VDEM Photo by George Rourty.)

technical hazards director. "We will miss his expertise and the outstanding job he did in the Central Virginia region."

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Training Calendar

Emergency Management

Flood Fight Operations

Dec. 10-11/Charlottesville

Local Situation Assessment/

Asking for Help

Dec. 12/Charlottesville

Jan. 28/Virginia Beach

Basic Public Information

Officer Course

Jan. 14-16/Richmond

Developing Volunteer Resources

Jan. 21-22/Richmond

Continuity of

Operations Planning

Jan. 29/Virginia Beach

Radiological

Radiation Awareness

January/Charlottesville

(Date Pending)

Reservist Training

Decision Making Workshop

Jan. 23/Richmond

Search and Rescue

GSAR Institute (Part I)

Jan. 24-26/Front Royal

SAR Council

Feb. 1/SAR Council

Technological Hazards

Hazmat Planning & Mgmt.

Jan. 14-16/Richmond

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Governor announces anti-terrorism and security legislation for 2003

During the 2003 session of the General Assembly, Gov. Mark R. Warner will seek legislative approval of key recommendations to strengthen Virginia's preparedness for and response to terrorist attacks and other emergencies and disasters.

The governor has accepted three sets of recommendations from his Secure Virginia panel and approved 54 proposals to include:

- Establishing a standardized Virginia incident management system to help first responders and state agencies improve joint operation capabilities.
- Strengthening the state's public health infrastructure by using new state and federal funding to hire 53 new public health specialists to track disease, developing bioterrorism response plans, and ensuring the ability to rapidly treat disease and distribute medications. Plans call for 85 more public health specialists to be hired statewide.
- Encouraging state universities and entities to work with federal agencies to be at the forefront of technical and policy solutions to cyber-terrorism threats.

The legislative proposals contain recommendations for the following reforms to make Virginia more secure:

- Enhance information sharing between government and the private sector by exempting certain data from public disclosure.
- Improve our ability to provide critical medical care in the aftermath of a terrorist attack by establishing a comprehensive database of medical practitioners, updating medical liability laws and streamlining the public medication distribution process.
- Improve school security and safety.
- Enhance employee background checks for sensitive positions.
- Clarify the line of succession for the governor's office.

For more information about the governor's legislative preparedness program and the panel's recommendations, visit VDEM's Web site at www.vaemergency.com/prepare/terrorismtoolkit.

EPCO conference resources available online

To best prepare their communities, emergency managers not only need to plan for disaster response and recovery but also must be proactive in involving citizens in the process. This citizen knowledge and preparation will be critical to their survival in emergency situations.

On Nov. 20, about 110 emergency managers and first responders attended the VDEM Emergency Preparedness Community Outreach conference to strengthen the readiness of the state and its citizens to deal with disaster, both natural and manmade.

Conference presentations and summaries are available online at www.vaemergency.com/library/cderesource.cfm.



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